

## *Valley Bible Church - Bible Survey*

### **Bible Survey Lesson 25: The Books of Chronicles, Part I**

#### **INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOKS OF CHRONICLES**

##### ***Introduction:***

Like the books of Samuel and Kings, the books of Chronicles were originally one unit. The Hebrew title refers to "the chronicled events of the period in history," very close to our present day "Books of the Chronicles. "

The Greek scholars at Alexandria, working on the Septuagint, divided the book into two parts and called them, *The Things Omitted*, thinking that they were a supplement to the books of Samuel and Kings. Actually, our present day title comes from the Latin Vulgate translation, which chose to call it *The Chronicles of the Whole Sacred History*.

As we enter our study of the Books of I and II Chronicles they appear to be a rehashing of the Books of I and II Kings, but there is one great difference. Kings present the Hebrew history from the view of the Kings and Prophets. Chronicles, however, looks at that same history from the view of the Priests. That is why they only deal with the kingdom of Judah.

In a sense, Kings presents Hebrew history from man's view, while Chronicles presents God's divine point of view. As Bible scholar John Philips put it, "Kings show man ruling, Chronicles show God overruling."

To illustrate this: The revival led by Hezekiah is reported in three verses in Kings, but takes up three chapters in Chronicles. ALSO . . . Kings describes, in detail, the building and furnishing of the temple, but Chronicles emphasizes the details and organization of worship.

##### ***Author and Time:***

Even though the author is not known for certain, Jewish tradition assigns the writing to Ezra. All we can know for certain is that the author was probably a Levite, perhaps a priest closely associated to the temple since it focuses on worship in Jerusalem.

The Books of Chronicles didn't originally follow the sequence of the Old Testament books as they appear in our Bible today. According to the Hebrew Canon they are at the conclusion of the Old Testament.

Many Christian scholars believe this is because the genealogies in Chronicles lead into the genealogies in Matthew, bringing us all the way from Adam to Jesus. They feel that they deal only with the nation Judah because they are leading up to the ultimate King from the tribe of Judah, on the Throne of David, **THE MESSIAH!**

An original remnant had returned under Zerubbabel to begin the re-building of the temple, but did not have permission to rebuild the palace. This was typical of the Persian style of rule. But, many preferred their new life of luxury as they were assimilated into the Babylonian and Persian lifestyles, as opposed to a life of re-pioneering the land, and did not return.

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The Chronicles were written after the Babylonian captivity ended as the returning Jews found their cities laying in rubble, their temple destroyed, their land devastated, still surrounded by hostile neighbors, and--worst of all--the Throne of David had vanished.

***I and II Chronicles present three facts:***

### **I. THE THRONE OF DAVID REMAINS**

Even though the physical throne of David was gone, God had protected the line of David. We know this because of the genealogies at the beginning of the books. It lists the line from Adam to Zedekiah, touching on Adam, Abraham, and David, thus covering the Adamic, Abrahamic, and Davidic Covenants through the line of Judah. God never allowed the line of David to be taken or lost.

In the brightest of times, under David and Solomon, or in the darkest, under evil kings, God kept His covenant promises and pursued His master plan for His chosen people.

All through the captivities by Assyria and Babylon, the thread remained. Through the inter-testament period of silence, the thread remained. Even through the time when God set Israel aside and is dealing primarily with the church, the thread remains--until the Messiah Himself sits on the throne of David.

### **II. THE TEMPLE OF GOD REBUILT**

Chronicles show that the temple had an vital part to play in the history and spiritual life of the "people of God, Israel. A new temple was built on the very foundation of the old to serve as a visible witness that God wishes to dwell among His people and to provide a place for them to worship Him as a nation.

The writer carefully reviews the temple's history:

David's dream (vision); Solomon's crowning achievement; local kings contaminating or cleansing; foreign kings desecrating, stripping, and destroying; Israel's abandoning and apostasy; remnant's rebuilding -- It is interesting that the Persian king was the one God used to instigate His re-building program--II Chron. 36:23, ". . . *The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah.* "

### **III. THE TROUBLES OF ISRAEL RECALLED**

It is made crystal clear that Israel's problem was apostasy. We are seeing the history of God's people from God's view. He is warning His people, once again, not to forsake Him and His Temple where they can create and keep a personal relationship with Him (Will they?)

Since Chronicles begins with Adam and ends with the decree of Cyrus, it represents the longest period of history in any Bible book. The kingdoms of David through Zedekiah are covered as well as the times of captivity under several world empires.

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It just reminds us that God will act out His will regardless of the power or plans of nations and rulers, regardless of the faithfulness or unfaithfulness of His own people. God cannot be dethroned and His ultimate will cannot be thwarted.

*In our next lesson ( Lesson 26) we will outline both books, but for now let's look at their purposes and what we can learn from them about God (Theology).*

### **THE BOOKS OF I AND II CHRONICLES:**

#### **1. Bring order and continuity to a study of God 's plan.**

Retelling the story of Israel should encourage Jew and Gentile alike since it illustrates:

- a. God has chosen to be personally involved with his created beings.
- b. God keeps every one of His promises even though, because of our disobedience, it can sometimes take a long time.
- c. Men and nations cannot thwart His plans.

HE WILL RE-ESTABLISH A NATION, A TEMPLE, AND A THRONE. HE WILL RECLAIM A PEOPLE, A CHURCH, AND A CREATION.

#### **2. Emphasize how to worship.**

Even though God insists that obedience is more important to Him than worship He still, as part of that obedience, wants us to worship in spirit, truth, music, sacrifice, and service.

#### **3. Clarify God's desire to use man.**

God will fulfill His plan for His people with or without any individual or national obedience, but He wants to work through us. God eagerly uses obedient, worshipful, and prayerful people to fulfill His will on earth.

God would rather work through us than go around us. Wouldn't we rather He would, also?

#### **4. Explain a right human response to His holiness.**

Since God is holy it should drive us to:

- a. A right view of ourselves
- b. A right view of sin and idolatry
- c. A right view of obedience and worship.

#### **5. Display the sovereignty of God**

As even pagan kings were often forced to acknowledge, God is God

- a. He controls nations whether they acknowledge Him or not.
- b. He controls nature as evidenced in contests and battles.

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- c. He controls events to fulfill His plans and prophetic messages.
  - d. He controls His own people, protecting and providing for them.
6. He reinforces the need for spiritual leadership.

In most cases, as the king acts, so acts the nation. Spiritual leadership comes from leaders who have a personal relationship with their King. Judah remained free over 130 years longer than Israel because good kings led them back to God and re-established true worship. The leaders of Judah were not judged on their secular accomplishments, but on their willingness to lead the people back to God and away from apostasy. The better the "clean up" the longer the rule.

### **7. Sin is serious.**

The sins of the people, especially their apostasy, brought punishment to them as individuals but also brought grief to their entire nations. The reaction and repentance of "the remnant" often had a great impact on God's dealing with the nations as a whole

### **8. Bottom line: God is redemptive!**

God punishes sin (destruction of Jerusalem, temple, exile), but judgment is not His final word. II Chronicles ends with the exiles allowed, no, directed to go home and rebuild the temple. God is a God of second chances, allowing we captured sinners a chance to repent and giving us freedom not to sin, but to serve.

#### ***Homework:***

Read: Last chance to catch up and read through II Chronicles.

Think: Review today's 8 lessons and personalize them.

Apply: Allow God's redemptive power to work in your life by confessing an area of spiritual weakness and letting "His kindness lead you to true repentance."--Romans 2:4

Lesson 26: The Books of I and II Chronicles, Part II

### **OUTLINE OF THE BOOKS OF I AND II CHRONICLES**

#### ***Introduction:***

We spent our last lesson looking at the three major facts presented in the Books of Chronicles:

#### **1. The Throne of David Remains**

Even though the throne of David seemed to be destroyed, God will protect the "Line of David" until The Lion of the Tribe of Judah, The Messiah sits on that Throne fulfilling the last of God's covenant promises to His people. No promise of God is ever broken.

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### **2. The Temple of God is Rebuilt**

The Temple has an important role to play in the life of Israel. It reminds them that He wishes to dwell among them and have a personal relationship with them which is still one of the purposes of worship today.

### **3. The Troubles of Israel Recalled**

God warns his people again not to forsake him and follow after idols.

Then, we studied the theology (what we could learn about God) in I and II Chronicles. Now we will take a brief look at the outline of these books.

#### **I. GOD'S REDEMPTIVE PLAN (I Chronicles 1- 29)**

God makes three significant statements about His nation's place in His master plan for the world. The fulfilling of that plan through the "line" or genealogy is no less important than His working through David or His Temple. They are all integral parts of His covenant promises.

##### **A. Revealed Through Genealogies (Chapters 1- 9)**

The genealogies from Adam to Abraham (1:1-27), from Jacob (Israel) to David (2:1-17), and from David to the post exile descendants (3:1-24) show the continuity of God's redemptive plan.

God's divine plan, which began before creation:

--intersected with humanity in Adam (Adamic covenant),

--continued through a man of faith, Abraham (Abrahamic covenant), who would bring the blessing to the whole world

--zeroed in on the line of David (Davidic covenant),

--and continued beyond the exile to prove God has not abandoned His plan.

The lineage of the high priest is carefully traced in Chapter 6 separating the sons of Aaron from the other Levites who were temple musicians and attendants but could not offer sacrifices.

Chapter 8 reminds us that the Lord chose David and Jerusalem as opposed to Saul and Gibeon.

Note: only the tribes who returned to Jerusalem when freed were listed.

##### **B. Revealed Through David (Chapters 10-20)**

Saul's death provides the transition into David's kingdom (10). David's rule was majestic (11-12), with its climax when he returned the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (13-16). Even though God would not allow him to build his dream temple he did promise him an eternal throne (17) and blessed him as he continued to give God credit for his victories (18-20).

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Chapter 10 reminds us that Saul's ultimate defeat and death was due to his own unfaithfulness and disobedience to God.

Chapter 16 is interesting in that it presents David's expressions of praise to God and presents calls to worship which we recognize as Psalms 96 and 106.

### **C. Revealed Through Worship (Chapters 21-29)**

Even though God would not let David build His temple, because he was a man of war, David did make great preparations. He organized the Levites and priests for temple worship, organized his army, and appointed Solomon king and Zadok as priest.

David organized the Levites into groups so that all the needs of the temple service would be met (23). Then he organized them into twenty four orders to serve in rotation (24).

Next he established three musical guilds under his own direction to provide music for the temple worship. They included musicians of all ages and different skill levels (25).

He finished by charging Solomon in front of the entire nation, delivering his plans for the temple that included plans for a treasury, storage rooms and even the furniture (28).

## **II. GOD'S REVEALED TEMPLE (II Chronicles 1- 36)**

II Chronicles describes the construction of the temple and the religious life of the nation under Solomon and the other kings of Judah.

### **A. During Solomon's Reign (Chapters 1 - 9)**

This first section deals with the temple and Solomon's role in it. This time the writer ignored the early struggles for control and focused on the highlight of his career, the building of the temple.

The Lord elevated Solomon in the eyes of his people, granted his request for wisdom, and blessed him with riches and power (1-2).

Chapters 3 through 7 detail the building and furnishing of the Temple, the dedication of the sanctuary and the instillation of the Ark. (Remember this is a good study: temple Types.)

In chapters 8 and 9 the writer illustrates how God honored His promises, expanded his kingdom, and gave him fame and wealth.

### **B. During Judah's Kings Reign (Chapters 10 - 36)**

The second part of II Chronicles reviews the spiritual life of Judah under a variety of kings. After Solomon's death and the separation of the kingdom, Judah alternates between spiritual decay and religious reformation.

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As you can see, this is a very long section and much of what is included was covered in the Book of II Kings. The history ebbs and flows based mainly on the king's attitude toward the temple and worship of the true God, on the one hand, and compromise and idol worship on the other. As we saw last week, when a king brought idol worship into Judah or allowed the "high places" to stand, the nation sank into apostasy, war and affliction.

Rehoboam refused to lighten the tax burden on the ten northern tribes causing the split (I 0 and I 1).

Abijah fought Jeroboam's apostasy (sermon in chapter 13) and supported worship led by true priests in Jerusalem.

Asa relied on the Lord and instituted reform, removing idols and rebuilding the altar (14 - 16).

Jehoshaphat served the Lord by sending Levites throughout the land teaching the Book of the Law (17).

Chapters 18-21 recap the reign of Jehoshaphat, his evil alliance with Ahab, the north's most wicked king, giving his son in marriage to Ahab's daughter. He repented and removed pagan objects of worship, but he later joined with Ahaziah, Ahab's son to build a mighty navy to conquer the world, but which God destroyed before it could leave port.

In the middle of Jehoram's (Jehoshaphat's son) evil reign, Jehu, his military commander was instructed by a prophet to purge the land of Baal worship. He did this by killing all of Ahab's family except Ahab's daughter Athaliah. She grabbed the throne and killed all of the heirs of Judah except Joash (a child) who was hidden in the temple (22).

The Levites and priests gathered the people together and made him king, killing Athaliah in the process. Joash restored the temple by collecting willing offerings from the people (23-24)

Uzziah (Azariah) became king at age 16 and, under the tutoring of Zechariah, was blessed by God for fifty-two years. He built a modern mechanized army and expanded the kingdom, but pride, evidenced by his attempt to present his own sacrifices, caused God to afflict him with leprosy (25-26).

His son Jotham was also righteous and blessed by God (27).

Ahaz followed, and he was noted for his practice of human sacrifice tied to his worship of Baal. Ahaz's punishment came in the form of military defeat and oppression (28).

Hezekiah's rule is given a lot of attention because of his work in bringing music into prominence in temple worship as he led an additional restoration. He re-instituted regular sacrifice and planned a great Passover convocation and teaching which brought a revival (29-31).

In chapter 32 we have the record of God's destruction of the armies of Sennacherib because of Hezekiah's faithfulness and, with Isaiah's help, he was blessed by God (32).

Manasseh was blamed for the destruction of Jerusalem by the writer of Kings, but here the Chronicler dwells on his capture by Assyria and his repentance which led him back to his throne and gave him an opportunity to restore the temple and renew worship (33).

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Josiah's rule was very exciting as he purged idolatry from the land and the high places throughout Judah. His rule was considered, by the writer of Kings, to be second only to David's in greatness as he re-instituted the Passover again.

Chronicles gives only a brief account of Judah's last kings since the slide was fast and furious (36).

### **C. During Cyrus's Reign (Chapter 36)**

The end of the book is one of the strongest evidences of God's overpowering sovereignty.

Cyrus, the king of the conquering Assyrians, published an edict permitting all conquered people to return to their lands and revive their religious tradition. For the Jews, he ordered the rebuilding of the Temple. Just when it looked like God's promises to Adam, Abraham, and David were abandoned, God used a pagan king to continue His master plan.

The statement which ends the Books of Chronicles also begins the accounts recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah. **READ II CHRONICLES 36:23**

### ***Homework:***

Read: The Book of Ezra

Think: What can I do to increase the place of worship in my life?

Apply: This week try to start each day with a time of worship.